delimitation will take place? Therefore, am I to understand from the hon. Home Minister that a special delimitation to identify the seats reserved for them will have to be made in the context of Sikkim?

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Sir, frankly, I have not yet made up my mind on the question. Although there is an opinion of the Solicitor General, I have not yet made up my mind on the question. I am inviting the Solicitor General to come and discuss the matter with me. But, in any event, the question can be addressed only after 2011. So, between now and 2011, we can resolve the Constitutional issue. Once the Census is complete, we will do whatever is permissible under the Constitution. But, to answer my good friend Arun's question, I have not yet come to any conclusion about the inter-play of these three articles of the Constitution.

DR. K. MALAISAMY: Sir, as I understand, article 371(F) is an enabling provision to go for reservation for other communities, other than the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes. This is my understanding. My specific question is: Is this enabling provision apply with reference to Sikkim alone, or, other States also? If it is available for other States also, I would like to know whether similar representations of this nature have come to you.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Sir, article 371 (F) is a special provision with respect to the State of Sikkim. There is no other Assembly in the country, which has compartmental reservation. The only reservations are: for Scheduled Castes, as a whole; for Scheduled Tribes, as a whole and the remaining seats are General. The Article 371 (F) applies only to Sikkim.

श्रीमती विप्लव ठाकुर : सभापति जी, माननीय मंत्री जी ने कहा कि यह 2026 तक फ्रीज़ है और बढ़ाया नही जा सकता। मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से सिर्फ इतना जानना चाहती हूं, चूंकि इंडिया की पॉपुलेशन बहुत बढ़ गई है और इस बढ़ती हुई पॉपुलेशन को देखते हुए क्या गवर्नमेंट 2026 से पहले ही कानून लाकर कॉस्टीट्यूएंसीज़ को बढ़ाए जाने की बात सोच रही है?

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Sir, 2026 is a provision in the Constitution brought about by an amendment. If that amendment has to be undone, it can only be done by another constitutional amendment, and I am not even thinking of anything like that at the moment.

Delay and cost escalation in NHDP projects

*362. SHRIMATI MOHSINA KIDWAI:
SHRI N.K. SINGH:††
Will the Minister of ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a large number of projects under the National Highway Development Project (NHDP) have been affected and are running behind schedule due to cost escalation and other reasons;

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††The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri N.K. Singh.

(b) if so, the facts and details thereof;

(c) whether various factors responsible for cost escalation of projects, cost variations and financial implications have been examined; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and the steps taken by Government to complete such projects without any further loss of time and cost escalation?

THE MINISTER OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) and (b) Yes Sir. 150 ongoing projects under NHDP have been affected due to various reasons including increase in prices of construction materials, delay in land acquisition, utility shifting, obtaining clearances from forest / environment, poor performance of some contractors and law & order problems in some States.

(c) and (d) Escalation depends upon various factors like increase in prices of construction materials, labour, machinery, etc. Escalation is paid as per contract if the delay is due to reasons beyond the control of the contractor. The overall escalation can only be determined on completion of the project. In order to expedite the process of four laning, progress of projects is closely monitored and concerted efforts are being made to expedite land acquisition, shifting of utilities, granting interest bearing advances to contractors, etc.

SHRI N.K. SINGH: Sir, in relation to the reply given to part (c) and part (d) which pertains to the factors leading to escalation of cost and time overruns, after a certain limit, these, as the hon. Minister is aware, require the revised approval of the PIB and the Expenditure Finance Committee. One of the critical factors which it examines is of fixing responsibility for time and cost overruns. So, apart from these factors, has the Ministry done any examination of who are the people and person responsible for time and cost overruns, and, if so, the action proposed to be taken against them?

SHRI KAMAL NATH: Sir, the cost overruns happen, as is explained here, for various reasons. Largely, cost overruns have happened because of land acquisition and engagement of the States in the process of land acquisition. Sir, in this whole programme, one of the major things which has been encountered is land acquisition. The hon. Member is right that there are other cases also where the content of cost estimates in our feasibility studies of the DPR has not been very accurate. So, while no policy is being made for fixing responsibility for this, in the case of consultants, we can do that, that this report was not good. But in the case of land acquisition, delays in land acquisition, change in alignments, reasons which occur because of the people of that area wanting to change the route a little bit, I do not know how far it is practicable to fix responsibility. But it is a point well made and we will see how this can be done in a more efficient manner.

SHRI N.K. SINGH: Sir, if you permit me ...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Second, not by right but by courtesy for the moment.

SHRI N.K. SINGH: Thank you very much, Sir; grateful for your indulgence.

Sir, I think, the hon. Minister has responded positively because one of the banes of all public outlays in the last sixty years is that for time and cost overruns in large public outlay projects like the road sector, there has been no responsibility fixed at all on any individual or group of individuals who may be held publicly accountable for the delays which have caused and the huge cost overruns which take place.

SHRI KAMAL NATH: Sir, the hon. Member, with his vast experience in administration, is conscious of the fact and it is a reality that there are huge cost overruns. And these cost overruns is a matter of concern because cost overruns require going through various processes of approval again, especially, if these cost overruns are above a certain percentage. This is not a problem of this Ministry alone. It is a problem of all the Ministries and the Government is conscious of this. Structurally, in the last couple of years, some efforts have been made by the Government at all levels to see how we can reduce it. I really cannot say we will be able to eliminate it. But, obviously, the endeavour is to see that our cost estimates remain accurate as far as possible.

श्री राजीव शुक्ल : सभापति जी, अच्छा है कि मंत्री जी ने अपने उत्तर में यह स्वीकार किया है कि जो तमाम प्रोजेक्ट्स हैं, उनमें देरी हुई, तमाम जगह कमियां हैं, तमाम गड़बड़ियां हैं। मैं इनसे यह जानना चाहता हूं, जैसा कि एन.के. सिंह जी ने भी कहा, कि इन सब के लिए जिम्मेदारी तय करने की जो बात है, तो कौन से लोग जिम्मेदार हैं? कम-से-कम इनके बारे में तो यह सूचित करें। कुछ ऐसे राजमार्ग हैं, जो बेहद महत्वपूर्ण हैं। मैं उदाहरण के लिए हापुड़-लखनऊ राजमार्ग के बारे में बताता हूं। इसमें जगह-जगह पर, 30-30 किलोमीटर या 40-40 किलोमीटर सड़क सालों से टूटी पड़ी है। यह कौन-सा राष्ट्रीय राजमार्ग का निर्माण हो रहा था कि जिसमें इतने-इतने बड़े पैचेज़ छूटे पड़े हैं और इनकी क्या वजह थी? अगर यह देश को बताया जाए, तो बहुत अच्छा होगा।

श्री कमल नाथ : सर, जैसा कि मैंने हाउस को पहले बताया कि हमारे सामने लैंड एक्विजिशन के तमाम प्रॉब्लम्स आ रहे थे। माननीय सदस्य ने हापुड़ से लेकर लखनऊ तक की बात कही है। उसमें हमारे सामने जो सबसे बड़ी दिक्कत आई थी, वह यह कि जितनी जमीन हमें लेनी पड़ी थी, उसमें प्रदेश सरकार ने एक कानून बनाया था कि जितनी जमीन हम एक्वायर कर रहे थे, उससे 10 मीटर और आगे बढ़ कर भी पेड़ लगाने के लिए लेनी पड़ेगी। परन्तु, Environment Ministry में ऐसा कोई कानून नहीं था इसलिए कई बार उत्तर प्रदेश सरकार से हमारी लिखा-पढ़ी हुई। अंत में वे मान गए हैं कि 10 मीटर एक्स्ट्रा जमीन लेने की जो बात है, वह हमें नहीं लेनी पड़ेगी।

सर, जहां तक सवाल उस सड़क का है, तो हापुड़ से लेकर गढ़मुक्तेश्वर तक 40 फीसदी सड़क बन चुकी है। उसमें कुछ environmental problems भी हैं। उसमें Hastinapur Wild Life Sanctuary आती है। उसकी वजह से वहां कुछ काम घिरा हुआ है। ...**(व्यवधान)**... नहीं, नहीं। मैं जवाब दे रहा हूं, आप उसे सुन लें। ...**(व्यवधान)**...

श्री विनय कटियार : वह नहीं बन पाई ...**(व्यवधान)**...

श्री कमल नाथ : आप पहले पूरा जवाब सुन लेते। ...**(व्यवधान)**...

श्री सभापति : आप पहले इन्हें सुन लीजिए। ...**(व्यवधान)**... आप पूरा सुन लीजिए। ...**(व्यवधान)**...

श्री कमल नाथ : क्या नहीं बन पाई? ...**(व्यवधान)**...

श्री विनय कटियार : वहां सड़क नहीं बन पाई ...**(व्यवधान)**...

श्री कमल नाथ : उस सड़क का 40 फीसदी काम हो चुका है। उसका जो कंट्रैक्टर है, उसे हमने poor performance के लिए नोटिस भी दी है। उस सड़क को U.P. Bridge Corporation बनवा रहा है। गढ़मुक्तेश्वर से मुरादाबाद तक जो सड़क है, उसका बहुत जल्द उद्घाटन होने जा रहा है। मुरादाबाद से रामपुर में एक दिक्कत Railway Over Bridge की आ रही है। उसकी drawings के लिए हमने रेलवे से लिखा-पढ़ी की है और उन्होंने उसे स्वीकृत कर दिया है। उस पर काम जल्द-से-जल्द स्वीकृत हो जाएगा। मुरादाबाद से लेकर सीतापुर तक के लिए अगस्त में ही RFP बन चुका है। सीतापुर से लेकर लखनऊ तक उस सड़क पर BOT के अन्तर्गत काम चालू है।

SHRI M. VENKAIAH NAIDU: Sir, it is a very important question. The hon. Minister said that there are 150 on-going projects under NHDP which are not doing well due to various reasons. Sir, for the last five years the Ministry or the Department has been practically sleeping. That is the feeling of everybody in the House. Will the hon. Minister place before the House the specific reasons project-wise regarding land acquisition, contractor's fault, environmental problem and so on? Will he provide fact-sheet to the House about the 150 on-going projects which are delayed and which are causing cost overrun and inconvenience to people? Will you please enlighten the House what arrangement the Government has made with regard to the maintenance of roads which are already made? We are in the eighth year now of the National Highway Programme. Many roads require repairs and nobody is attending to them. Will the hon. Minister respond to this?

SHRI KAMAL NATH: Hon. Member made a rather sweeping statement that for the last five years there was no work. This is a matter of fact and it is a good thing that we are talking about roads which are measurable. These are measured in kilometres. Just to put the facts correct so that the House is not under any illusion which is not correct. During the five years preceding, the first term of the UPA Government, total roads built was 2390 kilometres from 12th December 2000 to 21st May, 2004. I don't want to make it a contentious issue, but you raised it, so I thought I must give the facts. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI M. VENKAIAH NAIDU: That was the on-going programme. ...*(Interruptions)*... Hon. Minister is a senior Minister. He should not try to cover up or mislead the House. ...*(Interruptions)*... This is an on-going programme. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Let the Minister conclude. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI KAMAL NATH: I have not even finished and the hon. Member is assuming that I am going to say something which he does not like or which is not a fact or is misleading. It is not misleading. I want to make it very clear. I am just giving you a fact. Okay, you are saying that it is ongoing. Fine, it is ongoing. I am not saying that it is a new project, But, I am talking about the total kilometres built

which was, obviously, continuing with the ongoing projects much more in the last five years with the previous five years. It started in the previous five years. Okay. Now, as far as the question of 150 projects is concerned, which have got delayed, I will be happy to send to hon. Member a large list which is there, road-to-road, and the reason for delay. I will send it to the hon. Member. And, I am open to any suggestion or advice in this regard because this is a programme not merely concerning one Ministry, not merely concerning one Government, but concerning everybody, every Member of Parliament is affected by this. Roads traverse the whole country. It impacts trade, industry and agriculture. So, I think, we must perceive it that way and I am very happy and open to suggestions.

SHRI SITARAM YECHURY: Sir, I have a point and you will appreciate it. The hon. Minister will obviously send the information to the hon. Member. But, if he furnishes the information to you, it will be the property of the House so that all of us also know what is the status.

SHRI KAMAL NATH: Sir, with your directions, I will be very happy to do so.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, if it can be shared with one Member, it can be shared with all the Members. Shri Tarini Kanta Roy.

SHRI TARINI KANTA ROY: Sir, through you, I wish to know about National Highway-31. This is connecting North-Eastern States through northern part of Bengal. The condition of this Highway is very bad. At the same time, the construction of East-West Corridor is going on, but the pace of work is very slow. Mr. Chairman, Sir, through you, I wish to know what action the Ministry is going to take to make National Highway-31 transport worthy and to complete the East-West Corridor on time.

SHRI KAMAL NATH: Sir, though the question does not consist of the National Highway 31, I do have information and I will try and endeavour to answer with whatever information I have It is not about a specific highway. This has been delayed very largely. In fact, almost entirely, because of land acquisition and utility shifting. By 'utility shifting', I mean things like electrical line going through it. There are some Government facilities or private facilities. This also causes a lot of delay. There are multifarious Departments in the State Government which are involved in shifting these utilities. Sir, National Highway-31 is four-laning from Guwahati to Nalbari, Nalbari to Bijni. There is a bridge over the Brahmaputra River. Sir, one of the problems was delay due to the shifting of oil pipeline. Now, oil pipeline had to be moved little bit. There were other utilities which had to be moved and land acquisition had to be done.

AN HON. MEMBER: Sir, what about maintenance?

SHRI KAMALNATH: Sir, the road is still being made.